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FM AMEMBASSY LIMA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9222
INFO RUEHAC/AMEMBASSY ASUNCION PRIORITY 2021
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA PRIORITY 5929
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 7922
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES PRIORITY 3454
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS PRIORITY 1213
RUEHLP/AMEMBASSY LA PAZ AUG 4958
RUEHMN/AMEMBASSY MONTEVIDEO PRIORITY 9565
RUEHQT/AMEMBASSY QUITO PRIORITY 2033
RUEHSG/AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO PRIORITY 1977
RUEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIMA 001413

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/26/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PE](#)
SUBJECT: INDIGENOUS STRIKES SUSPENDED

REF: LIMA 1380

Classified By: CDA James Nealon for reasons 1.4b and d.

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Congress voted decisively August 22 to overturn presidential decrees governing land tenure and ownership in the Amazon regions, ending protests led by indigenous groups (ref). Many observers accused the government of imposing decrees on indigenous populations without consulting them first, while government officials warned that congress's actions could generate more protests in the future. Some data show that social conflicts have increased markedly over the past year. End Summary.

¶2. (SBU) Peru's Congress on Friday, August 22nd, voted overwhelmingly -- 66 votes to 29 -- to nullify two presidential decrees governing Amazonian land ownership that had provoked nearly two weeks of protests and roadblocks in Peruvian jungle regions (rep). Opposition parties along with parties normally aligned with the governing APRA party united to strike down the decrees, leaving the government with little outside support. In response to Congress's actions, indigenous leaders temporarily suspended the strikes. (Note: The decrees reduced from two thirds to a simple majority the percentage of local community members required to approve changes in the status of community-owned land. The President issued the decrees using powers temporarily granted to him by Congress in order to pass PTPA implementing legislation and to "promote competitiveness". End Note.)

¶3. (SBU) Many observers have criticized the government for issuing decrees that could affect indigenous land tenure without first consulting with impacted groups. Some have attacked the government for hubris and argued that this latest episode fits a pattern ignoring the needs of common people to focus on the needs of the wealthy. In a representative reaction, former President (and future aspirant?) Alejandro Toledo (2001-2006) said of the conflict: "Arrogance is a dangerous political ally ... I think President Garcia's support in the polls has fallen, because he has decided to govern only for the rich."

¶4. (SBU) The government and private sector groups have criticized Congress for creating incentives to protest, and argued that the presidential decrees only aligned rules governing Amazonian landholding with rules governing coastal landholdings. Prime Minister Jorge del Castillo has also warned that the government would block the Congressional bill nullifying the presidential decrees. In addition, he has announced plans to travel to the jungle to dialogue with

indigenous leaders.

15. (C) Comment: Over the past two years, the Garcia administration has attempted to respond to strikes with tough talk, minimal concessions, and emergency negotiations. With the political temperature rising, it is unclear whether this has been or will continue to be a successful strategy. The Human Rights Ombudsman's office (Defensoria del Pueblo) recently concluded that active social conflicts -- including minor ones -- rose from 28 in July 2007 to 97 one year later.

End Comment.

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